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Perceptions Of Violence Among High School Students

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PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

SANNER

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Perceptions of Violence Among High School Students

BY

Beth Sanner

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2006

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of violence among high school students. The researcher analyzed the differences in the perceptions of the severity of violence among high school students in the following demographic characteristics: ethnicity, gender, academic achievement, regional location and family make-up. In addition, the differences in the severity of physical, verbal and social violence was found and also compared among the above mentioned demographic characteristics. The sample included 145 high school students in Illinois. A quantitative causal comparative design was used to compare perceptions of violence among existing groups of high school students. Additionally, a qualitative questionnaire was used after a presentation on violence prevention to assess students' knowledge of violent acts occurring in their school and their perception of prevention methods.

It was found that there was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of violence among ethnicities, between genders, and among different levels of academic achievement, regional locations or types of guardianship. Statistically significant differences were found in perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among all groups of students. Physical violence was seen as more severe than verbal; verbal violence was seen as more severe than social.

There was no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among ethnicities, between genders or among different types of family make-up. However, MANOVA and additional follow up tests found a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of physical violence among levels of academic achievement. Those students who reported making mostly As and

mostly Ds ranked physical violence as much more severe than did students who reported making mostly Bs and mostly Cs. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the severity of physical violence among participants living in different regional locations. Students from the southern rural school ranked physical violence as being much less severe than did students from the northern suburban and central urban schools.

Results were found for the qualitative questionnaire completed by participants. When asked, "Do you think violence can be prevented in your school?" 33.1% of students (n = 48) answered yes. In addition, 60.7% of students (n = 88) answered no, and 7.6% of students (n = 11) answered "We can try." Overall, students from all three schools were more apt to say that violence cannot be prevented in their schools. When asked why they thought violence could or could not be prevented, the most notable responses lie with the reasoning that people will continue to be violent anyway. Overall, 27.6% of students thought of this answer on their own and wrote it on the questionnaire. The most popular responses for students answering how violence can be prevented in their schools were "increasing punishment" (n = 41, 28.3%), "providing education and programs" (n = 26, 17.9%), "increasing security" (n = 25, 17.2%), "watching what students individually do and say" (n = 20, 13.8%), and "counseling" (n = 18, 12.4%).

Further research is recommended on the perceptions of the severity of physical violence among high school students of different levels of academic achievement and students from urban, suburban and rural areas. It is recommended that a larger sample from each region be surveyed in Illinois, and the United States of America.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“We must know Harlem to design a program for Harlem; we must know the barrios of Texas to be able to work there. Programs must be in the language of the people who hear them.” (Hill, 1999, p. 268). It is important for educators to know how students feel about the severity of violent acts in order to know how to create a prevention method that can be customized to the diversity of their schools.

Young people experience more violence than any other age group (FCCLA, 2005). Violence among high school students is present in every community. Incidences of violence usually start small and escalate into something more serious (Elliot, Hamburg & Williams, 1998; Sexton-Radek, 2005; Shafii & Shafii, 2001). As stated by Elliot, Hamburg and Williams, “Finally, there is a clear developmental progression from minor delinquent acts to more serious ones, with the serious interpersonal violent acts” (1998, p. 15). Elliot, Hamburg and Williams asserted that aggressive behavior such as fighting frequently and in a physical manner with siblings, resisting adult control, or cruelty to animals, possibly detected during childhood precedes major incidences of violence such as gang fights, serious public assaults, and stealing (1998). Kathy Sexton-Radek reported that forms of aggression like controlling another person can change in its “forms and functions” and end in physical violence. This progression can occur over time and from childhood to adulthood (2005, p. 5). Shafii and Shafii report that individuals who are physically violent have beginnings that include “impulsive behavior, poor frustration tolerance, poor self-control and tend to be sensation-seeking” (2001, p. 34). Educators

and professionals working with high school students need to be knowledgeable of the varying types of violence (physical, verbal and social) and how each plays a role in the cycle of violence.

Perceptions of what is considered violent are as diverse as high school students themselves. This study explored the relationships between perceptions of violence and the demographic characteristics of student ethnicity, gender, school achievement (grades), regional location, and family make-up. When school teachers, administrators and other professionals who work with high school students are knowledgeable about student beliefs of what is violent and what is not, they can begin to redirect student perceptions that are harmful. Such harmful student perceptions perpetuate retaliation through injurious actions such as punching or berating another student. Teachers and administrators can strive to change harmful perceptions through violence prevention education.

Need for the Study

High school students are both victims and perpetrators of violence. Primary stakeholders of the results of this study will be all advocates for high school students including but not limited to educators, administrators, social workers, psychologists and community mentors. For stakeholders such as educators and professionals working with this age group, it is crucial that they be aware of what students believe violent behavior is and what it is not. When advocates of high school students learn what students believe is violent behavior, they can begin to understand how to prevent the problem.

Perceptions of violence can vary among diverse groups of individuals. It has been shown that males and females are involved in different types of violence and react differently toward various forms of violent acts (Hill, 1999; Hurst, 2005; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Simmons, 2002; Steffensmeier, Schwartz, Zhong & Ackerman, 2005; Wyss, 2004). Geographically, both in different regions of the United States and in different sizes of towns, high school students view acts of violence in different ways (Cornell & Loper, 1998; Hill & Drolet, 1999; Price, Telljohann, Dake, Marsico & Zyla, 2002; Wood & Zalud, 1996). In addition, perceptions related to violence are reported as dissimilar among various groups of ethnicities, especially those in different nations (Hill & Drolet, 1999; Leach, 2003; Kenya, 1997; Pitner, Astor, Benbenishty, Haj-Yahia & Zeira, 2003; Zeira, Astor, Benbenishty, 2003).

Student organizations such as Family, Career and Community Leaders of America have developed peer prevention programs to help stop violence in schools. By training high school students on appropriate attitudes, skills and resources needed to prevent violent acts, students can better help peers in their schools and communities (FCCLA, 2005).

Benefits

The results of the study benefit educational professionals of high school students by providing data from a sample that represents a combination of demographics that has not been previously reported. Researchers have reported results of studies of violence among ethnicities and gender; however, the incidences of verbal and social violence have

not been reported. In addition, studies reviewed indicated that only violent acts have been recorded; whether the student believes the act is right or wrong has not been published.

The results of this study will be provided for Family, Career and Community Leaders of America's STOP (Student's Taking On Prevention) the Violence Program to be shared with participating chapters across the nation. With the results of this study, students and teachers will better know what acts students perceive as violent. Educators will have the flexibility to focus on the demographics of the perpetrators in their school and gear a prevention program to change the attitudes and perceptions of such students.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher assumed principles of the study will remain constant. First, it is assumed that all participants can read and write at a level necessary to complete the survey. Also, the researcher expected that students will answer the questions honestly, not in a way that they feel might appease the researcher or a teacher by answering what those members would want to see.

Limitations of the study included utilizing a convenience sample. The convenience sample was limited to three schools due to time and travel constraints of the researcher. The participants were limited to Family and Consumer Sciences students in those schools.

Because participants were under the age of 18, legal guardian consent forms were signed before participation occurred. In addition, prior to completing a study in the schools, administrators approved of the data collection process.

Definition of Terms

In order to provide clarification of crucial terms, the following definitions were utilized in this study:

1. Violence. "Violence is anything that harms or threatens to harm a person's body, feelings or possessions." (FCCLA, 2005).
2. Physical Violence. "Any act that does harm to a person or property by means of physical action. Examples include: biting, blocking a path, kicking, stomping, torturing, tripping, and stabbing." (FCCLA, 2005).
3. Verbal Violence. "Any expression through words, written or uttered that does harm. Examples include: calling a person names, insulting a person and/or his or her beliefs, interrupting, lying, making fun of a person's ability, body, or clothing, malicious gossiping, sending malicious e-mails or IMs (instant messages), slamming a person on a blog or web site, ordering a person around, ridiculing, and threatening to damage possessions, do bodily harm, or threatening to kill." (FCCLA, 2005).
4. Social Violence. "Social behavior that hurts a person. Examples include: betraying a trust, conning a student out of money or into doing something, excluding a person, making faces, giving dirty looks, sabotaging a friendship, stealing, and touching a person in an unwelcome manner." (FCCLA, 2005).
5. High school student. A student of any age that is enrolled in ninth through twelfth grades.

6. Family make-up. The type of guardianship, or structure of family of a student. Categories can include one or more of the following: single parent home, divorced parents, parent with stepparent, married parents, living with grandparents, foster parents, group home, or any other category provided.

7. Perception. Recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli based chiefly on memory. (American Heritage, 1997).

Research Questions

Three research questions were addressed within the study. The questions explored included the following:

1. What actions of high school students are perceived as violent by high school students?
2. What is the relationship between ethnicity, gender, school achievement (grades), regional location, and family make-up to high school students and their perceptions of violence?
3. After participating in STOP the Violence program activities, what actions will students list as being effective ways of preventing violence?

Summary

This study provides information needed to understand how United States high school students perceive violence. Only by understanding how students feel about acts of violence, can their peers and advocates begin to educate them on how to stop the violent acts. With the results of this study, advocates of high school students are given a better understanding on ways to create prevention programs for specific groups of students.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This literature review focused on the diversity of perceptions and violent acts primarily among students in the high school age group. The sections of the review include (a) an overview of high school violence statistics; (b) research that has been conducted determining the types of violence that males and females commit; (c) differences in violent acts among diverse ethnicities; (d) research that has been published concerning violence in differing geographical locations in the United States and in the world; (e) the link between academic achievement and violence; (f) research studied on the relationship between family make-up and violence; (g) and a description of the STOP the Violence prevention program.

High School Violence

Fingerhut states, "The United States has been deemed the most violent country in the industrialized world" (as cited in Sexton-Radek, 2005, p.49). Elliot, Hamburg and Williams add "...more than one-half of juvenile victimizations occurring at school or on school grounds [in America]" (as cited in Sexton-Radek, 2005, p. 49). Homicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals 15-24 years of age (Sexton-Radek, 2005; Elliot, Hamburg, Williams, 1998). It is the leading cause of death for United States American male youth (Shafii & Shafii, 2001).

Teens are more likely to be perpetrators of violence than any other age group (Shafii & Shafii, 2001). Violent actions committed by teens are not always extreme cases; violence happens on a small level in every school. School shootings affect less

than 1% of the United States American high school and middle school population; however 20% of United States students are affected by bullying on a daily basis (Sexton-Radek, 2005).

Gender

Males.

Hagan states, "The male crime rate exceeds that of females universally, in all nations, in all communities, among all age groups, and in all periods of history for which statistics are available" (as cited in Sandhu & Aspy, 2000, p. 89). It is suggested by Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) that masculinity plays a major role in the difference between violence that occurs between males and females. The authors state that masculinity, although constructed by a person's culture, is also specific to male-gendered humans. The article advocates that violence between two males is often in the form of physical violence. It is common for male to male violence to occur in gang activity that exists outside of school.

Male to male fights usually occur as a result of specific grievance such as drugs, girls, or territory. The authors write that such fights occur physically as an attempt to gain power and achieve the opposite of femininity (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997). Males are more likely to use weapons during violent acts to emphasize their attempt at gaining power. Hill and Drolet (1999) reported that between 1993 and 1995 male students were significantly more likely to bring a weapon to school.

Genetically, males might be at higher risk of being violent than females. Shafii and Shafii (2001) found that testosterone in males could make them more violent. Studies on male mice with extra testosterone have supported this theory. Scientists are currently studying males with chromosomal make-up of XYY instead of XY. Some males with two Y chromosomes have been involved in violence ending in arrest.

Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) agree that males may impose physical violence on females. Such violence usually occurs in the form of rape or domestic violence; frequently occurring within relationships, unlike male to male violence. Male to female violence of this nature can occur in school, but is more difficult to commit in a supervised setting such as school. Male violence is an issue that stretches beyond the borders of the United States.

Females.

According to Hill and Drolet (1999), female students were reported as being less violent in schools. In the same study, female students were less likely to be threatened or injured at school. Most schools record violence in the form of physical violence. Injuries and threats of physical violence gain notoriety in the media and with teachers and administrators. Violence occurs in females, yet in a different form.

Females handle violence much differently according to Simmons (2002). In her qualitative study of eighth grade girls, she found that females handle relationship difficulties through verbal and social violence. Females tend to shun other females from a group of friends. Also, reports from Simmons' case studies suggest that females have a "culture of violence" that exists to socially outcast an individual in order to gain more power. Issues like "rumor-spreading" and "alliance-building" were repeated offenses.

She stated that relational aggression is used; this type of violence is defined as “violence that harms others through damage (or threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendships or group inclusion” (Simmons, 2002, p. 21).

Gender gap.

Yet another report suggests that the gender gap between males and females is closing when it comes to violence. It stated that the amount of male arrests and female arrests are becoming closer. The rise in female violence is said to be caused by the struggles that girls face today. “Girls today face greater struggles in maintaining a sense of self and they confront a much more complex, multidimensional and often contradictory set of behavioral scripts that specify what is appropriate, acceptable or possible for girls and young women to do.” It was found that the gender gap between “minor” incidences of violence was larger than “major” occurrences (Steffensmeier, et al., 2005).

On the other hand, Sandhu and Aspy (2000) reported that a gender gap will always remain because moral development differs for males and females, as asserted by Kohlberg and Gilligan. Because genders are treated differently through socialization, males and females have different stages of moral development. Gilligan found that females are more concerned with interpersonal actions than males. Such moral reasoning reflects the types of violence exhibited in males and females.

Gender non-conforming.

Gender, usually defined as female or male, does not necessarily mean that a person must fit into either category. A study conducted by Wyss (2004) reported that “gender non-conforming” high school students are often victims of violence. Non-conforming means that an individual does not claim being solely male or female. Such position might arise from a sex change, sexual orientation or having an opposite “gender identity” than that of the person’s sex. Life in high school for such persons is filled with victimization of violence, both physical and many times sexual. Case studies included instances of being beaten, burned and raped in school.

Ethnicity

United States minorities.

Hill and Drolet (1999) found that minorities in the United States, especially African Americans and Hispanics, were more likely to be involved with violence. Asian, African American and Hispanic students were more likely to carry a weapon to school. Also, African American students were statistically more likely to be threatened or injured than Caucasian students. In 1995, Hispanic students were over two times more likely to be involved in a physical fight than Caucasian students. Homicide was found to be the leading cause for death among African Americans aged 15-24. Violence among African American communities are more impacted because neighborhoods in which some of them live are poverty stricken (Elliot, et al., 1998).

African population.

Leach (2003) reported on students from Zimbabwe, Malawi and Ghana. She explains that culturally it is more acceptable for male students and teachers to be physically and sexually violent toward females in the school system than in the United States. Most of the 112 females interviewed as part of a qualitative study were victims of violence by a male teacher, or knew another female who had been a victim. In such African cultures, boys are socialized to keep their masculinity by regularly asking for "sexual favors" from girls. If girls turn male students down, they often are sexually assaulted and groped on school grounds. Little is done by teachers, who are mostly male. Of the junior high girls interviewed, 22.4% had been personally assaulted by a male student. In Johannesburg, South Africa in 2000, it was found that 25% of males interviewed under the age of 18, admitted that they had sex with a girl without her consent (Leach, 2003).

The Women's International Network News (1997) reported that in Kenya, the main reason girls do not complete school is because of violence endured in that setting. Culturally, it is the norm for fathers to berate their wives in front of their children. From a young age, boys are taught to verbally and physically abuse the women in their lives. This habit carries into the public school setting. It is stated that although boys experience violence at school, females are more likely to be victims of physical and sexual violence.

Israeli population.

A study conducted in Israeli schools found that 25% of high school students and 33% of elementary and middle school students felt that violence was either a big or very big problem in their school. Differences were found between the two main ethnicities in Israel: Arabic and Jewish. It was reported that 19.5% of Jewish high school students felt that violence in their school was serious, while 43.7% of Arabic high school students felt the same. In the study, Arabic students reported the "more serious behaviors" whereas Jewish students reported "low-level" violent acts (Zeira, et al., 2003).

A similar report comparing Jewish and Arabic students in central and Northern Israel found that 88% of Jewish students felt that Arabic students are more violent, yet only 52% of Arabic students felt they were more violent than Jewish students. Of Jewish students polled, 77% felt that Arabic husbands were more violent toward their wives than Jewish husbands. On the other hand, only 50% of Arabic students felt that Arabic husbands were more violent toward their wives. It concluded that perceptions of violence among Arabic and Jewish ethnicities vary (Pitner, et al., 2003).

Geographical Regions

Urban.

It is possible that the urban areas are most notable for hosting violence among students. In a report on junior high adolescents, it was found that 34% (from three different urban communities) were in a fight the past month, and 55% from that same group carried a weapon in the month previous to the study. In addition, 47% of Hispanic

youth in urban cities had been in a fight in the previous year. Of the same Hispanic youth, grades 6th through 8th who were polled, 3% carried a knife and 2% carried a handgun to school almost everyday (Price, et al., 2002).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recorded in 1997 that 25% of all homicides that were reported occurred in Chicago, New York, Detroit, Houston, and Los Angeles (Shafii & Shafii, 2001). Shafii and Shafii found that although suburban schools receive more media attention for the violent acts that occur in their schools, urban schools are considerably more violent. The violence that occurs in urban high schools is directly related to the types of violence that happen in the community (2001). "Violence in urban schools was seen as an angry response to structural inequalities in American society: poor conditions, dilapidated and decaying neighborhoods, and hopeless opportunities in life" (Sandhu & Aspy, 2000, p. 90).

Suburban.

Sandhu and Aspy (2000) explain that in the past, urban cities were seen as having the most violent schools. Due to the school shootings beginning in 1996, the United States has seen that widespread violence has hit affluent suburban neighborhoods. Such perpetrators in suburban areas do not usually match the typical prototype of a violent student, which, in turn brings shock to the unsuspecting community.

An extensive study conducted in suburban Virginia surveyed 10,909 students from 7th, 9th and 11th grades. It found that 19.3% of the students were involved in a school fight in the past month. Also, 20.7% of students claimed they used alcohol or drugs before or during a school day. In order to protect themselves, 13% of suburban students in this area brought a weapon to school. Illegal drug use was reported at 17.4%

for males and 12.6% for females. According to the qualitative part of this study, students reported that it is not good to invoke violence, but if another student were to start a fight or even threaten to fight, then it would be appropriate to fight (Cornell, & Loper, 1998).

Rural.

Rural students are not exempt from violence, but school officials may not recognize the instances of violence, according to Wood and Zalud (1996). Rural mid-western United States administrators from South Dakota public schools were surveyed to find that 28% feel that violence was not a problem in their school. In addition, 45% of administrators felt it was an insignificant problem, and 17% felt it was a slight problem. The most frequent type of violence occurring was fights and the second was bringing knives to school. Although the overall youth homicide rate has decreased, the rural homicide rate increased 38% in 1997 (Shafii & Shafii, 2001).

Academic Achievement

It is suggested that students who participate in violent acts are more likely to have poor motivation, a negative attitude toward school, and are more likely to be an early leaver of high school (Sexton-Radek, 2005; Shafii & Shafii, 2001, Elliot, et al., 1998). If a student regularly receives discipline due to behavior at school, he or she will be less receptive to take responsibility for attaining academic knowledge offered from the teachers who must also act as disciplinarians. Leaving high school before graduation means that a student is twice as likely to participate in a crime or violent act that would end in a prison sentence (Sexton-Radek, 2005).

Osborne reported that factors such as “academic failure, low bonding to school, truancy, withdrawal from school, and frequent school transitions” suggest the potential for youth violence (2004, p. 1). As students become less interested in academics, they become more interested in finding a social network. A student with low academic motivation might drop out of school and find a social network of peers who have also dropped out. Such network is likely to participate in violence. Unfortunately, when a student leaves school early, there is usually no motivation to return, either from parents, social groups, or family relationships (Osborne, 2004).

Professionals working in the school need to be familiar with the reason why students are not succeeding academically. Sexton-Radek states that if a student is not attentive in class, fails one or more classes, or does not work to his or her potential, he or she may be exposed to violence either at school, home or in the community (2005). As part of the community, the school needs to find help for this student.

Family Make-Up

One of the most influential environments, the family, is said to impact student behavior. Sexton-Radek reported that students who are more violent have had problems in their “rearing environment” (2005, p. 56). Incidences such as abuse or neglect at home leave a child more at-risk for being a perpetrator of violence. If a child was forced to leave his or her parents before the age of ten, he or she is more likely to be a perpetrator of violence (Elliot, et al., 1998). When parents and guardians are perpetrators of violence in the home, children are much more likely to be violent themselves.

A study conducted by Olweus states that a father's over assertiveness and a mother's permissiveness is an indicator of aggression among their sons (Elliot, et al., 1998). It was reported that if there is a lack of involvement and supervision in a child's life, there is a 95% likelihood the child will be a perpetrator of violence (Parren & Hornung, 2005; Sandhu & Aspy, 2000). However, Soriano and Soriano (1994) stress that not all parents wish to purposely leave their children unattended. It was suggested that parents may need to spend more time at work to pay for daily living needs.

Likewise, a marriage problem in the home has proven to be an indicator of aggression. Neighborhoods with a high level of single parents or women who are head of household are more likely to experience violence (Elliot, et al., 1998). If there is a stepparent in the home, children are 40 times more likely to experience abuse than those who are raised by both biological parents (Sandhu & Aspy, 2000).

Violence Prevention Program

One violence prevention program is called the STOP the Violence program, offered for students in the Family and Consumer Sciences student organization of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). The program is a peer education prevention program; students are trained to carry out projects in their schools and communities that will help their peers recognize, report and reduce the potential for youth violence. STOP the Violence is funded by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (FCCLA, 2005).

STOP the Violence began in 1999 in response to a major school shooting at Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky. Missy Jenkins, president of the (then) Future Homemakers of America chapter was shot in the back and paralyzed from the waist down. Students in the organization developed the program to encourage members to prevent another student from being shot or injured in any way (FCCLA, 2005).

The goals of the program include: (a) empower students with attitudes, skills and resources to make their schools safer; (b) involve young people in efforts to prevent youth violence; (c) use peer education to increase youth awareness of and involvement in strategies that reduce youth violence; and (d) reduce the potential for youth violence in schools with trained STOP the Violence teams. Implementing these goals requires FCCLA members to attend a STOP the Violence training offered in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Students are trained to develop and recognize attitudes, skills and resources in their schools and communities that could help stop violence (FCCLA, 2005).

The program uses students to conduct projects because they are the age group most likely to make changes and recognize warning signs among their peers. The STOP the Violence program recognizes that violence occurs in every school in different forms. Most often violence starts small and turns into something much more serious. In addition, students are not encouraged or taught violence intervention, a task to be taken by adults. STOP the Violence is purely a prevention program; stopping the potential for violence before it occurs (FCCLA, 2005).

Conclusions

Gender and violence has proven to be the most studied topic reported.

Researchers are not in agreement as to which gender is more violent. Some found that males are more violent (Shafii & Shafii, 2001; Sandhu & Aspy, 2000; Hill & Drolet, 1999; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). It has also been reported that females are equally violent, just in a social and verbal manner (Simmons, 2002). Researchers show that male and female violence is very different (Sandhu & Aspy, 2000). Other researchers indicated that the gender gap is closing and females are engaging in major violent practices (Steffensmeier, 2005). Wyss (2004) found that students who do not claim a gender are most at-risk for being victims of violence.

Violence among ethnicities has been shown to differ statistically. United States minorities such as African American, Asian, and Hispanic populations have been shown to commit more known violent crimes (Hill & Drolet, 1999; Elliot, et al., 1998). Such differences are due to the poverty stricken communities in which there are concentrated African American, Asian, and Hispanic populations. The conditions of poverty-ridden communities are such that violence is more common due to lack of resources (Elliot, et al., 1998). Leach (2003) and the Women's International Network News (1997) explain how Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ghana and Kenya, have cultures that are more accepting of degradation and violence toward women and young male students. Students in Israel reported a high level of peer to peer violence in their school system (Zeira, et al., 2003). Researchers explain the diversity in opinions of violence among Jewish and Arabic people (Pitner, et al., 2003).

The research regarding violence and geographic location is inconclusive. Urban cities have been reported to have more frequent violence due to the poor community conditions in which they live (Price, et al., 2002; Shafii & Shafii, 2001; Sandhu & Aspy, 2000). Suburbs also have violence, but usually only the extreme school shootings take the spotlight (Cornell, et al., 1998). Rural areas are usually not seen as being violent; however, the homicide rate is increasing (Shafii & Shafii, 2001; Wood & Zalud, 1996).

Although specific areas of academic achievement and violence have not yet been researched, Osborne (2004) found that low academic motivation leads to students becoming disengaged and frustrated with the school system. Low academic achievement could be a precursor for a student leaving school before graduation and possibly joining a social network linked to violence. Many researchers have found that students who become violent usually have low academic motivation (Sexton-Radek, 2005; Shafii & Shafii, 2001, Elliot, et al., 1998). Students exposed to violence at home have a difficult time at school as well (Sexton-Radek, 2005).

Last, little research has been conducted to compare the relationship between family make-up and student violence. However, violence was able to be linked to students living in homes with marital disharmony and those living in neighborhoods with high levels of single parents and women as head of household. Such communities that have a high density with single parents and women as head of household generally face financial struggles. Areas in which resources including housing are lacking are linked with violent activities to which children are exposed (Elliot, et al., 1998). Families with stepparents are at risk for child abuse (Sandhu & Aspy, 2000).

Although such information does not directly relate to the concept of family make-up, it was found that violence in the home and lack of parenting skills leaves children more at risk for becoming violent (Parren, 2005; Sexton-Radek, 2005; Sandhu & Aspy, 2000; Elliot, et al., 1998).

STOP the Violence is a Family and Consumer Sciences based program that can be used by students for violence prevention purposes. It focuses on all types of violence, social, verbal and physical, and allows students to be trained on the subject of violence. Students who participate in the program learn to reduce violence by creating a project to carry out in their schools and communities (FCCLA, 2005).

The review of literature began with information about high school violence. Differences in violence among gender and ethnicity were reported. Geographical locations in the United States and in the world were reviewed. In addition, the relationships between violence and academic achievement and violence and family make-up were examined. The STOP the Violence program and philosophy were both described.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter three includes the design of the study, research questions and hypotheses. The population and samples of participants are described. Procedures for the study are given with descriptions of instrumentation and data collection methods. Following the instrumentation, data analysis is described.

Research Design

A quantitative causal comparative design was used to compare perceptions of violence among existing groups of high school students. Additionally, a qualitative questionnaire was used after a presentation on violence prevention to assess students' knowledge of violent acts occurring in their school and their perception of prevention methods.

Research Questions

Three research questions were addressed within the study. The questions explored include the following:

1. What actions of high school students are perceived as violent by high school students?
2. What is the relationship between ethnicity, gender, school achievement (grades), regional location, and family make-up to high school students and their perceptions of violence?
3. After participating in STOP the Violence program activities, what actions will students be able to list as being effective ways of preventing violence?

Research Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There is no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of what constitutes high school violence among the demographic characteristics of ethnicity, gender, school achievement, regional location and family make-up.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among the demographic characteristics of ethnicity, gender, school achievement, regional location, and family make-up.
3. After participating in STOP the Violence activities, students will be able to list actions appropriate for preventing violence.

Population/Sample

All participants were currently enrolled in a high school, grade nine through twelve. Students were of any age, but were required to be a high school student. A convenience sample was used. Students in Family and Consumer Sciences classes from three Illinois high schools were asked to participate. Family and Consumer Sciences teachers in high schools from different locations and of diverse enrollments were asked to participate. A large, affluent school from a suburb of Chicago was asked to participate. In addition, students from an urban large high school from central Illinois were asked to fill out surveys. Finally, a small, rural school from southern Illinois was utilized as well.

Instrumentation

A mixed method approach was used to collect data. Two instruments were given to the subjects. The following categories describe each instrument in detail.

Quantitative survey.

Students were asked to read and provide answers to questions presented in a quantitative survey. Participants read a fictitious scenario involving high school students and violence, each featuring a different type of violence, including physical, verbal and social. After reading the scenarios, students were able to express their perceptions of the severity of the specific types of violence by circling a number from zero to five. Table 1 shows the type of violence depicted by each fictitious character in each scenario. Types of violence, physical, verbal and social were determined by using the definitions of each type of violence used in this study. At the end of the survey, the participants were asked to provide their ethnicity, gender, grades, and type of guardianship (family make-up). The survey is included in Appendix A.

Table 1

Types of Violence in Scenarios in the Quantitative Survey

Name	Scenario	Violence
Joseph	1	Verbal
Nate	1	Physical
Jamie	2	Physical
Ana	2	Physical
Rachelle	3	Social
Lorelei	3	Not Violent

Table 1 continued

Name	Scenario	Violence
Mia	A	Verbal
Tonya	A	Verbal
Jeffery	B	Social
Tia	B	Social
Josiah	B	Not Violent
Reina	C	Physical
Alex	C	Physical
Terell	C	Physical

The survey did not require students to give a personal account of violence that has occurred in their lives. It provided a non-obtrusive outlet to find students' perceptions about specific scenarios. Student responses were kept confidential, as students were instructed to not put their name on the survey. Two different forms were distributed to provide a greater number of scenarios and violent acts. The survey was evaluated for face validity to provide assurance that it measured what the researcher intended for it to assess (Trochim, 2005). Three professors from the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at Eastern Illinois University, as an expert panel, provided face validity for the six scenarios on the survey.

Qualitative questionnaire.

After participating in activities from the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America National Program, STOP (Students Taking On Prevention) the Violence facilitated by the researcher, students were given an open ended qualitative questionnaire. Students were asked "Do you think violence can be prevented in your school? Why?" and "What can be done in your school to prevent violence?" This questionnaire was kept confidential, as the students did not write their names on it. The qualitative questionnaire is located in Appendix A.

Data Collection

After the study was approved by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board, permission from administrators and the Family and Consumer Sciences teacher was obtained prior to distributing legal guardian consent forms and the research instruments. Documentation of Institutional Review Board approval can be found in Appendix B. An introductory letter asking the school to participate is located in Appendix C and permission letters from each administrator is located in Appendix D.

Students in Family and Consumer Sciences classes were briefed by the researcher on the purpose of the study. Students were reminded that they could stop taking the survey at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the process. The briefing also included directions for filling out the survey and instructions to put each survey in an envelope when finished for confidentiality purposes. The researcher ensured that the students' answers would be kept confidential and would not be shared with their Family and Consumer Sciences teacher or other students.

Students who turned in a legal guardian signed consent form were asked to read and sign a student assent form explaining the purpose of the study and results. Students who completed these steps were asked to respond to the three question survey. Examples of physical, verbal and social violence appeared at least once in scenarios on each survey. Scenarios were identified as 1, 2, and 3 on one form and as A, B, and C on the other. Students were asked to read a scenario and circle a number from 0-5 representing the severity of the act committed by each character in the scenarios. Zero represented "not at all violent", while 5 represented "extremely violent". In between 0 and 5, 1 represented "somewhat violent", two represented "annoyingly violent", three represented "definitely violent", and four represented "very violent." The guardian consent form and student assent form is located in Appendix E.

After collecting the survey, the researcher presented a thirty minute training session focused on "What is violence?" and "What can I do to prevent it?" Two activities from STOP (Students Taking On Prevention) the Violence, a program of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America were presented. The first activity, called "Violence Is..." required students to brainstorm words that come to their minds when they heard the word "violence." They were to write the words around the perimeter of a large piece of butcher block paper shared by four to six students. In the center of the paper, they were asked to write "Violence Is..." and write a group definition of violence. Students then shared their definitions with the rest of the groups in the classroom to see how diverse their answers were.

Next, students were given the definition of violence provided in the definitions section of this thesis. They were also given the definitions of physical violence, verbal violence, and social violence. Students were encouraged to think about what type of violence is least recognized, and what types of violence exist in their school. The second activity called "Continuum of Violence" allowed students to see how people think different acts of violence could have different levels of severity, and that not all violence is physical in nature. Each student was given a colored note card. They were instructed to write an example of violence on their card that correlates with the color of the violence definition of either physical, verbal or social. In their groups, students placed their cards in order from least violent to most violent. After sharing their continuums with the rest of the class, it was apparent that not all groups agreed that physical violence was the most severe. After this activity, students were given ten minutes to complete the qualitative questionnaire and place in an envelope at the end of the presentation. The researcher repeated this process for each class hour of the school day that was utilized for the study.

Data Analysis

Quantitative survey.

SPSS statistical software available through Eastern Illinois University was used to analyze the data recorded from the surveys. Tests utilized to analyze the data for each hypothesis were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: To compare perceptions of students grouped by ethnicity, gender, school achievement, regional location, and family make-up and the perceptions of the severity of violence in general, an ANOVA and appropriate follow up tests were used.

Hypothesis 2: To compare perceptions of students of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence grouped by ethnicity, gender, school achievement, regional location and family make-up and the perceptions, MANOVA and appropriate follow up tests were used.

Qualitative questionnaire.

Hypothesis 3: To compare student answers to the questions "Do you think violence can be prevented in your school? Why?" and "What can you do to prevent violence in your school?" the researcher reviewed open-ended answers. The answers were recorded using a frequency rubric recording similar types of responses. Such responses were hand-tabulated.

Summary

Included in this chapter was the design of the study, including research questions and hypotheses. The instruments were described and data collection methods were given. In addition, the sample population was explained. Data collection methods were introduced, and in Chapter Four, an analysis of the research results will be presented.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of the study was to find the perceptions of physical, verbal and social violence among high school students in three high schools in Illinois. Data collection took place in northern suburban, central urban, and southern rural schools. The results of this study are reported according to the order of the hypotheses stated in Chapters One and Three. A total of 145 students participated in the study by completing the quantitative survey and qualitative questionnaire. A response rate indicates the percentage of students who participated among all students in a given class. At the northern suburban school, there was a response rate of 64%. A response rate of 79% was recorded at the central urban school, and 93% of students participated in the southern rural school. The students who did not have a parental consent form signed, and therefore did not participate, were given an alternative activity by the researcher. Two teachers gave non-participating students work to complete, and they did not participate in any violence education activities, but were present in the classroom.

Population/Sample

All participants were high school students grades nine through twelve enrolled in one of the three high schools used in the study. Students were taking a Family and Consumer Sciences course and were surveyed during that course. The students attended one of three schools in the state of Illinois; a northern suburban, central urban and southern rural school granted permission for the researcher to conduct research during Family and Consumer Sciences Courses. Appendix E contains permission letters from each school. The total number of participating students reached 145, however, students

were encouraged to mark multiple demographic characteristics in the categories of ethnicity and family make-up, and therefore some frequency data may not total 145.

Table 2 describes the frequencies of each demographic category.

Table 2

Demographic Frequencies for the Sample

	All	Suburban	Urban	Rural
Ethnicity				
African American	16	0	16	0
Asian	6	4	2	0
Caucasian/White	133	33	30	70
Hispanic	5	3	2	0
Native American	6	0	3	3
Other	4	1	3	0
Gender				
Female	110	32	35	43
Male	35	6	15	14
Grades				
Mostly As	43	16	14	13
Mostly Bs	63	20	20	23
Mostly Cs	36	2	14	20
Mostly Ds	3	0	2	1

Table 2 continued

	All	Suburban	Urban	Rural
Family Make-Up				
Married Parents	94	33	32	29
Biological Parents but never married	3	0	2	1
Divorced Parents	20	5	4	11
Single Parent	18	0	8	10
Parent with Step- Parent	25	0	7	18
Grandparents	7	2	2	3
Foster Parents	2	0	1	1
Other	1	1	0	0

Severity of Actions of High School Students Perceived By High School Students

The first research question asked was "What actions of high school students are perceived as violent by high school students?" Participants were asked to circle a number on a scale from zero to five indicating their perception of the level of violence committed by the fictitious student in the scenario. The ANOVA and appropriate follow up tests were used for analysis. A mean score of all violent acts was determined for each student, and differences in ethnicity, gender, academic achievement, regional location and family make-up were analyzed.

Ethnicity.

ANOVA tests indicate that there is no statistically significant difference, $F(5, 133) = 2.021$, $p = .081$, in the perceptions of the severity of all types of violence among different ethnicities. Frequencies, mean scores and standard deviations for all ethnicities are reported in table 3.

Table 3

Severity of All Types of Violence

Demographic	<i>f</i>	M	SD	<i>p</i>
Ethnicity				.081
African American	16	2.005	.149	
Asian	6	2.469	.240	
Caucasian/White	133	2.072	.071	
Hispanic	5	2.258	.247	
Native American	6	2.313	.226	
Other	4	2.319	.292	
Gender				.895
Female	127	2.209	.075	
Male	43	2.050	.098	
Academic Achievement				.243
Mostly As	53	2.278	.111	
Mostly Bs	71	2.108	.098	
Mostly Cs	43	2.056	.106	
Mostly Ds	3	1.986	.319	

Table 3 continued

Demographic	<i>f</i>	M	SD	<i>p</i>
Regional Location				.147
Northern Suburban	38	2.113	.621	
Central Urban	50	2.073	.464	
Southern Rural	57	1.897	.649	
Family Make-Up				.013
Married Parents	94	2.041	.092	
Biological Parents but never married	3	1.806	.319	
Divorced Parents	20	2.362	.153	
Single Parent	18	2.250	.156	
Parent with Step-Parent	25	2.181	.143	
Grandparents	7	2.490	.249	
Foster Parents	2	1.958	.391	
Other	1	1.625	.553	

Gender.

The level of significance found by ANOVA tests, $F(1, 113) = .017$, $p = .895$, shows that there was no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the severity of all types of violence between genders. Males and females reported statistically similar means in their perceptions of the severity of all types of violence.

Table 3 shows the mean scores, frequencies and standard deviation found by the ANOVA test.

Academic Achievement.

Again, ANOVA tests found no statistically significant difference, $F(3, 113) = 1.413$, $p = .243$, in the perceptions of the severity of all types of violence among students with different levels of academic achievement. Table 3 shows the frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviation for each self-reported level of academic achievement.

Regional Location.

After comparing the perceptions of the severity of all types of violence among students from different regional locations, ANOVA test scores, $F(2, 142) = 1.943$, $p = .147$, found that there was no statistically significant difference to report. Students from the northern suburban, central urban and southern rural locations had statistically similar mean scores that are reported in table 3.

Family Make-Up.

The initial ANOVA tests of between-subjects effects found a statistically significant difference, $F(7, 113) = 2.677$, $p = .013$, in the perceptions of the severity of all types of violence among different types of guardianship. A post hoc test was run to investigate the possible differences. The post hoc test found no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the severity of all types of violence among family make-up categories. This was likely caused by a small number of students in some categories. Table 3 shows the frequencies, mean scores and the standard deviations of participant scores in different guardianship categories.

Summary

The hypothesis that "There will be no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of what constitutes high school violence among the demographic characteristics of ethnicity, gender, academic achievement, regional location and family make-up" was accepted at the $p < .05$ level of significance. ANOVA test scores report that students of varying demographic characteristics have similar perceptions of the severity of different acts of violence.

Perceptions of the Severity of Physical, Verbal and Social Violence Among the Demographic Characteristics of Ethnicity, Gender, Academic Achievement, Regional Location and Family Make-Up

The second research question, "What is the relationship between ethnicity, gender, school achievement (grades), regional location, and family make-up of high schools students and their perceptions of violence?" was created to find the differences in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence as they relate to demographic characteristics. The MANOVA and appropriate follow up tests were used to find the relationship between the scores for physical violence, verbal violence, and social violence, which were then compared among demographic characteristics. As with the first question, the number of students reporting under specific categories may not total 145, the total number of participants, as students were encouraged to check all demographic characteristics that represented them.

All students and the severity of physical, verbal and social.

Analysis of variance was conducted to determine if students perceived differences in the severity among physical, verbal and social violence. Statistically significant differences, $F(2, 506) = 145.80$, $p = .000$, were found. Test scores, reported in table 4, show that all categories of students felt physical violence is more severe. The mean for verbal violence was much lower, while the mean for social violence is even lower. All students grouped together indicated that the severity of violence ranked in order from most severe to least severe was physical, verbal, then social. Multiple analysis of variance and additional follow up tests were conducted to determine differences in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among demographic characteristics.

Table 4

All Students and the Severity of Physical, Verbal and Social Violence

Violence Type	M	SD
Physical	3.1314	0.90021
Verbal	1.7189	0.75158
Social	1.4294	1.23354

Ethnicity.

Table 5 displays the means and standard deviations for physical, verbal and social violence for each ethnicity. MANOVA tests indicated that there is no statistically significant difference, $F(15, 489) = 1.054$, $p = .398$, in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among different ethnic groups that were surveyed in this study.

Table 5

Severity of Physical, Verbal and Social Violence Among Ethnicities

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Physical			.309
African American		3.1875	0.69887	
Asian		3.6667	0.78881	
Caucasian/White		3.0581	0.94505	
Hispanic		3.4000	0.36515	
Native American		3.6667	0.76012	
Other		3.4167	0.63099	
	Verbal			.302
African American		1.6875	0.60208	
Asian		1.9167	1.02062	
Caucasian/White		1.6818	0.74719	
Hispanic		1.8000	1.09545	
Native American		2.4167	0.66458	
Other		1.6250	0.47871	

Table 5 continued

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Social			.651
African American		1.2188	1.53806	
Asian		2.0833	1.62532	
Caucasian/White		1.4129	1.16320	
Hispanic		1.8000	1.48324	
Native American		1.0833	1.46344	
Other		1.7500	1.44338	

Gender.

MANOVA test scores show that there is no statistically significant difference, $F(3, 165) = 1.416, p = .240$, in the perception of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence between genders. Table 6 lists the means and standard deviations for physical, verbal and social violence for both males and females.

Table 6

Severity of Physical, Verbal and Social Violence Between Genders

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Physical			.998
Female		3.1323	0.86006	
Male		3.1318	1.02905	
	Verbal			.063
Female		1.7817	0.78612	
Male		1.5349	0.61135	

Table 6 continued

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Social			.184
Female		1.5000	1.25220	
Male		1.2093	1.17632	

Academic Achievement.

MANOVA tests found a statistical difference, $F(9, 495) = 1.712$, $p = .083$, at the .10 level of significance, in perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal, and social violence among levels of academic achievement. Significant differences were found through the Scheffe post hoc test. It was found that students who categorized themselves in the "mostly As" category and "mostly Ds" category felt physical violence was more severe than did students in the "mostly Bs" and "mostly Cs" categories. There were no statistically significant differences found in the perceptions of verbal or social violence. Table 7 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for perceptions of physical, verbal and social violence for all academic achievement levels.

Table 7

Severity of Physical, Verbal and Social Violence Among Differences in Academic Achievement

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Physical			.013
Mostly As		3.4528 ^a	0.69212	
Mostly Bs		2.9906 ^b	0.87282	
Mostly Cs		2.9444 ^b	1.09919	
Mostly Ds		3.4444 ^a	0.90283	

Table 7 continued

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Verbal			.593
Mostly As		1.7925	0.68243	
Mostly Bs		1.6268	0.78703	
Mostly Cs		1.7857	0.78974	
Mostly Ds		1.6667	0.57735	
	Social			.329
Mostly As		1.5660	1.20909	
Mostly Bs		1.3380	1.35693	
Mostly Cs		1.4762	1.05895	
Mostly Ds		0.3333	0.57735	

Note: Numbers with different subscripts have different means at the .05 level of significance.

Regional Location.

There was a statistically significant difference, $F(8, 328) = 2.387$, $p = .016$, found through MANOVA tests in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among participants living in different locations in Illinois. Post hoc tests showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the severity of physical violence among different regional locations. It was found that participants in the northern suburban and central urban had statistically similar perceptions. Participants in those two regions perceived physical violence as more severe than did participants from the southern rural region. No statistically significant

differences were found in the perceptions of the severity of verbal or social violence.

Table 8 illustrates the mean and standard deviation of each regional category as it relates to the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal or social violence.

Table 8

Severity of Physical, Verbal and Social Violence Among Different Regional Locations

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Physical			.001
Northern Suburban		3.4309 ^a	0.74253	
Central Urban		3.2738 ^a	0.67602	
Southern Rural		2.8519 ^b	1.05689	
	Verbal			.936
Northern Suburban		1.7073	0.82140	
Central Urban		1.6964	0.57744	
Southern Rural		1.7431	0.83495	
	Social			.800
Northern Suburban		1.3780	1.34991	
Central Urban		1.3661	1.32284	
Southern Rural		1.5000	1.10696	

Note: Numbers with different subscripts have different means at the .05 level of significance.

Family Make-Up.

MANOVA tests show no statistically significant difference, $F(21, 483) = 1.473$, $p = .081$, in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal, and social violence among participants with different types of guardianship. Table 9 shows the mean and standard deviation for each type of guardianship and type of violence, physical, verbal, and social.

Table 9

Severity of Physical, Verbal and Social Violence Among Different Types of Families

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Physical			.863
Married Parents		3.0780	0.77664	
Biological Parents but never married		3.3333	0.88192	
Divorced Parents		3.1000	1.08202	
Single Parent		3.4074	0.80485	
Parent with Step-Parent		3.1806	1.11199	
Grandparents		3.1905	1.16837	
Foster Parents		2.5000	2.59727	
Other		3.0000	n/a	
	Verbal			.078
Married Parents		1.6064	0.78928	
Biological Parents but never married		2.3333	0.57735	
Divorced Parents		1.8750	0.64635	
Single Parent		1.8333	0.51450	

Table 9 continued

Demographic	Violence	M	SD	<i>p</i>
	Verbal			.078
Parent with Step-Parent		1.8542	0.78684	
Grandparents		1.8571	0.62678	
Foster Parents		2.2500	0.35355	
Other		0.0000	n/a	
	Social			.138
Married Parents		1.2606	1.21312	
Biological Parents but never married		0.1667	0.28868	
Divorced Parents		1.8750	0.64635	
Single Parent		1.8333	0.51450	
Parent with Step-Parent		1.4583	1.17877	
Grandparents		2.2143	1.46791	
Foster Parents		2.0000	2.82843	
Other		2.0000	n/a	

Summary

The hypothesis "There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among the demographic characteristics of ethnicity, gender, school achievement, regional location, and family make-up" proved itself true except for two instances. First, there were statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the severity of physical violence among levels of academic achievement. Those students who reported making "mostly

As” and “mostly Ds” ranked physical violence as much more severe than did students who reported making “mostly Bs” and “mostly Cs”. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the severity of physical violence among participants living in different regional locations. Students from the southern rural school ranked physical violence as being much less severe than did students from the northern suburban and central urban schools.

Student Ideas of Violence Prevention

After participating in two violence education activities, participants were asked to answer the questions, “Do you think violence can be prevented in your school? Why or why not?” and “What can be done to prevent violence in your school?” Students were asked to answer the questions in an open-ended manner. The qualitative responses were hand-tabulated and organized on a rubric utilizing Microsoft Excel. Answers to the questions were categorized by similar responses. Not all questions will have 145 answers, as students were permitted to give more than one response per question.

Violence prevention in schools.

When asked, “Do you think violence can be prevented in your school?” 33.1% of students ($n = 48$) answered “yes”. In addition, 60.7% of students ($n = 88$) answered “no”, and 7.6% of students ($n = 11$) answered “we can try.” Overall, students from all three schools were more apt to say that violence cannot be prevented in their schools. The southern rural and central urban schools felt more strongly so than did the northern suburban school. Table 10 shows the common responses of participants and the percentage from each regional location that reported the response.

Table 10

Violence Prevention in Schools

Region	Response	Percentage
Northern Suburban	Yes	47%
	No	53%
	Can try	5%
Central Urban	Yes	26%
	No	58%
	Can try	10%
Southern Rural	Yes	30%
	No	67%
	Can try	7%

Reason for violence prevention in schools.

Students gave eight common reasons for why violence could or could not be prevented in their schools. Table 11 shows the common responses given by students and the percentage from each location that gave the response. The most notable responses lie with the reasoning that people will continue to be violent anyway. Overall, 27.6% of students thought of this answer on their own and wrote it on the questionnaire. Each school had more than 26% of students responding this way. In addition, 19.3% of southern rural students felt that rumors would be a type of violence that would never leave their school; no other participants from the other two schools responded using the term "rumors."

Table 11

Why Violence Can and Cannot be Prevented

Response	Region	Percentage
People can control	Northern Suburban	13%
	Central Urban	14%
	Southern Rural	7%
People will be violent anyway	Northern Suburban	26%
	Central Urban	28%
	Southern Suburban	28%
Violence is everywhere	Northern Suburban	11%
	Central Urban	6%
	Southern Rural	5%
Too many types to control	Northern Suburban	13%
	Central Urban	12%
	Southern Rural	18%
Rumors are too widespread	Northern Suburban	0%
	Central Urban	0%
	Southern Rural	19%
Some violent without knowing it	Northern Suburban	5%
	Central Urban	0%
	Southern Rural	3%

Table 11 continued

Response	Region	Percentage
Too linked to home/outside school	Northern Suburban	0%
	Central Urban	4%
	Southern Rural	7%
Clash of personalities	Northern Suburban	3%
	Central Urban	4%
	Southern Rural	0%

How violence can be prevented in schools.

Students suggested eleven ways in which violence could be prevented in their schools. The most popular responses for students answering how violence can be prevented in their schools were “increasing punishment” (n = 41, 28.3%), “providing education and programs” (n = 26, 17.9%), “increasing security” (n = 25, 17.2%), “watching what students individually do and say” (n = 20, 13.8%), and “counseling” (n = 18, 12.4%). Students in the southern rural location, responded most frequently that “punishment should be increased” (n = 21, 36.8%). The participants in the central urban school had the most responses in the same category (n = 11, 22%). Northern suburban students had many responses in the following categories: “increased security” (n = 15, 39.5%), “implementing education and programs” (n = 12, 31.6%), “counseling” (n = 9, 23.7%), and “increased punishment” (n = 9, 23.7%). Table 12 shows the percentage of students who gave a common response from each regional location.

Table 12

How Violence Can be Prevented

Response	Region	Percentage
Work it out	Northern Suburban	11%
	Central Urban	4%
	Southern Rural	7%
Education/Programs	Northern Suburban	32%
	Central Urban	2%
	Southern Rural	5%
Counseling	Northern Suburban	24%
	Central Urban	10%
	Southern Rural	7%
Increased security	Northern Suburban	40%
	Central Urban	10%
	Southern Rural	9%
Punishment	Northern Suburban	24%
	Central Urban	22%
	Southern Rural	37%
Individuals change actions	Northern Suburban	3%
	Central Urban	10%
	Southern Rural	25%

Table 12 continued

Response	Region	Percentage
More extra-curricular activities	Northern Suburban	3%
	Central Urban	0%
	Southern Rural	2%
Stop being bystanders	Northern Suburban	5%
	Central Urban	0%
	Southern Rural	5%
Peer Mediation	Northern Suburban	3%
	Central Urban	10%
	Southern Rural	0%
Teachers show they care	Northern Suburban	0%
	Central Urban	4%
	Southern Rural	2%
Closed Lunch	Northern Suburban	0%
	Central Urban	0%
	Southern Rural	2%
Increase student/teacher ratio	Northern Suburban	0%
	Central Urban	0%
	Southern Rural	2%

Summary

Data was provided to answer the three research questions including the severity of violence and the relationship between the demographical characteristics of ethnicity, gender, academic achievement, regional location and family make-up. Results were given for the comparison of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence and the relationship between the above mentioned demographical characteristics. Last, qualitative data was presented in a frequency format to the questions asked of high school students after participating in the violence education activities.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to find the perceptions of violence among high school students. The researcher analyzed the differences in the perceptions of the severity of violence among high school students in the following demographic characteristics: ethnicity, gender, academic achievement, regional location and family make-up. In addition, the differences in the severity of physical, verbal and social violence was found and also compared among the above mentioned demographic characteristics. Last, students provided responses to two questions posed about the success of prevention methods in their schools.

Two instruments were used for data collection. A quantitative survey with three scenarios of instances that involved violence between two high school students was first used. On that same survey, students were asked to provide information regarding their gender, ethnicity, average grades and type of guardianship. Two forms were created to provide a wider variety of scenarios to the study. A second qualitative questionnaire was used to ask students if they felt violence could or could not be prevented in their schools and why; and if so, what could be done to prevent violence in their schools.

The data was collected in three schools in Illinois; one from a northern suburban community, one from a central urban district, and one from a southern rural population. Approval from school administration and a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher was gained for each school. The researcher worked with Family and Consumer Sciences teachers from each school; each teacher allowed for either a half day or full day of class time to be spent participating in this study. Students first took the quantitative survey,

and then the researcher presented two activities on violence prevention. Participants were given the opportunity to learn about the definition of violence and the three different types of violence, physical, verbal and social. After participating in activities, participants completed a qualitative survey stating their opinions about the prevention of violence in their school.

The data collected from the quantitative survey was entered into Eastern Illinois University's SPSS statistical data software for analysis. The quantitative data provided students' mean score of the severity of violence in general and the severity of physical, verbal and social violence. Such statistics were compared in specific categories of the demographic characteristics of ethnicity, gender, academic achievement, regional location and family make-up. Student responses written for the qualitative survey were recorded in a rubric created on Microsoft Excel by the researcher. Similar answers were condensed into twenty-two categories.

Conclusions

Three research hypotheses were formulated for this study. Of these hypotheses, two were accepted, and one was partially accepted. Perceptions of violence identified in this study are related to findings of violent acts as reported in the literature review.

Hypothesis 1.

There will not be a statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of what constitutes high school violence among demographic characteristics of ethnicity, gender, school achievement, regional location and family make-up. This hypothesis is accepted since there was not a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between categories within the characteristics. Slight differences in mean scores were found, for

example, in the case of academic achievement, students who reported making Mostly As felt the violence in the scenarios were more severe than did students who reported making lower grades. Some trends noted included students who reported making Mostly Ds had a lower mean score for the severity of violence than did students who reported making Mostly As, Bs, and Cs. Sexton-Radek provides a reason to believe why students who make lower grades feel violence is more severe. Students who have lower achievement in school may have more exposure to violence (Sexton-Radek, 2005). If a student is more exposed to violence, he or she may understand the severity of it.

In the case of regional location, students from the northern suburban community felt violence was more severe than did students from the other two locations. Likewise, students from the southern rural location had a lower mean score indicating that violence was seen as less severe. Wood and Zalud found that administrators from rural communities may not recognize violence in their communities (1996). This finding may translate to students when it comes to recognizing the severity of violence. However, it is important to note that when a post-hoc test was run, no significant difference was found.

Hypothesis 2.

There will not be a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among the demographic characteristics of ethnicity, gender, school achievement, regional location, and family make-up. This hypothesis is partially accepted. First, the hypothesis is false for the case of all demographic characteristics and the severity of physical, verbal and social violence.

There was a significant difference between means among physical violence and the other two categories. As a whole, high school students feel that this type of violence is much more severe than verbal and social.

When comparing demographic characteristics, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal and social violence among ethnicities, between genders, and among different types of families. However, when it came to verbal violence, there was a .063 significance, nearing the $p = .05$ level of significance. Females felt that verbal violence was more severe than did males. Simmons reported that females experience violence through verbal and social violence rather than physical violence (2002). Since females are more likely to experience verbal violence rather than physical, this may contribute to their heightened perception of the severity of verbal violence over males.

There was a statistically significant difference found in the perceptions of the severity of physical violence among levels of academic achievement and regional location. Students who reported making Mostly As and Mostly Ds felt physical violence was much more severe than did students who made Mostly Bs and Mostly Cs. As stated above, Sexton-Radek found that students with lower grades are more likely to experience violence outside of school (2005). However, no literature has found why high achieving and low achieving students share similar perceptions of the severity of physical violence.

In addition, participants from the northern suburban and central urban locations felt physical violence was much more severe than did students in the southern rural locations. Wood and Zalud report that administrators from rural schools do not recognize

instances of violence in their schools (1996). It is likely that this could be true for students in rural regions, suggesting why they did not feel physical violence was as severe as the northern suburban and central urban regions.

Hypothesis 3.

After participating in STOP the Violence activities, students will be able to list actions appropriate for preventing violence. This hypothesis was accepted. Students were able to provide a wide variety of answers as to why or why not they felt violence could be prevented in their school. In addition, students provided methods that might decrease violence in their schools. Most students reported that violence could not be prevented in their schools. The most highly reported answer why was that people would choose to be violent anyway. The top response given for an idea for preventing violence was increased security (39.5%) for the northern suburban schools. Both the central urban (22%) and southern rural (36.8%) schools had the most responses as instilling stricter and consistent punishments to those who are violent at school.

Implications

Because no statistically significant difference was found in the perceptions of the severity of all types of violence and all students, it is indicated that all students have a similar understanding of what violence is and what it is not. In addition, no statistically significant difference was found in the perceptions of the severity of physical, verbal or social violence among different ethnicities, between genders, or among different types of guardianship. This shows that students view the severity of physical, verbal and social violence similarly.

Students agreed that physical violence was more severe than verbal or social violence, however when conducting an activity on the "Continuum of Violence" they realized that some forms of verbal or social violence can seem worse than some forms of physical violence. Students making Mostly As and Mostly Ds felt that physical violence was more severe than did those students who reported making Mostly Bs and Mostly Cs. Due to their academic situation, students have perceptions that are different from one another. Students from different regional locations also have diverse perceptions of physical violence. Such perceptions could be developed by their exposure, whether much or little, that their school and location provides.

Students had a general consensus that violence cannot be altogether removed from the school setting because there will always be students who will not follow rules, and this is a reality in their situation. Participants from schools reported similar answers for prevention methods. From the students' perspectives, this is a grave need in their school.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been generated to respond to the perceptions of violence among high school students found in this study. In addition, the recommendations are to be used to increase prevention methods among students, teachers, staff and administration in high school settings.

1. Because students of all demographic characteristics understand what violence is and what it is not, school administration, teachers and staff must work to enforce all rules to ensure that students are not knowingly committing an act of violence.

2. Since students as a whole felt physical violence was more severe than verbal or social, it is suggested that they be taught the differences between the three types of violence. Also, students may have chosen physical violence as being most severe, because in a school setting it is most visible and most likely to be followed with punishment or some type of retribution. Since physical violence is, of the three types of violence, the main focus of high school students, it should be addressed by schools. Students should be made aware of what a school considers physical violence, and punishments should be clear and consistent. In addition, since students feel physical violence is more severe, they need to be educated on how verbal and social violence often precedes physical violence, and prevention must start at those points (Elliot, Hamburg & Williams, 1998; Sexton-Radek, 2005; Shafii & Shafii, 2001). Verbal and social violence can be just as violent as some forms of physical violence.

3. Administrators, teachers and staff should work to recognize verbal and social violence and stop it at its roots. Appropriate punishment or actions should be taken to ensure that the student recognizes the act as violence. Since students are the individuals most likely committing violence in schools, they should be asked what schools should do to decrease violence and to prevent it.

4. In this study, the northern suburban school students reported the top method of prevention as being increased security. Both the central urban and southern rural school participants reported their top prevention method as increased and/or consistent punishment for the perpetrators of violence in their school. High school staff should work to improve such methods.

It is suggested that further research be conducted on the differences in the perceptions of violence among high school students with different levels of academic achievement. Having students self report their average grades was an effective and unobtrusive way of finding and comparing such information. In addition, further research should be conducted on the differences in perceptions of violence among urban, suburban and rural students. It is recommended that more schools within each region in Illinois be surveyed. In addition, this study could be conducted on a national level, distributing surveys to different regions in the United States of America. Due to the statistically significant difference found in this study with participants' perceptions of the severity of physical violence, further research may develop more in-depth findings. Last, continued education of what violence is and the differences and severity of physical, verbal and social violence in the high school setting to prevent further violence from occurring is strongly suggested by the researcher.

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Appendix A

Surveys and Questionnaire

Each of the following situations has occurred in a high school setting. Please read each scenario and respond to the statement below.

1. Joseph expresses his hate for Nate by calling him a derogatory name. Nate decides that he will not allow another student to get away with dishonoring him, so he punches Joseph in the face. Joseph does not fight back, but tries to free himself from Nate's blows.

Please circle the number that best describes the level of violence occurring with each person.

	not at all violent	somewhat violent	annoyingly violent	definitely violent	very violent	extremely violent
<i>Joseph</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Nate</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

2. Jamie found out that another girl at her school, Ana, was going out on dates with her boyfriend. Upon seeing Ana entering the school building, Jamie jumps on top of Ana and starts pulling her hair. Ana decides to hit Jamie.

Please circle the number that best describes the level of violence occurring with each person.

	not at all violent	somewhat violent	annoyingly violent	definitely violent	very violent	extremely violent
<i>Jamie</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Ana</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

3. Rachelle and her friends were sitting at a lunch table when Lorelei asks to sit with them. Rachelle refused to let Lorelei sit with her friends. Lorelei sits at another table by herself.

Please circle the number that best describes the level of violence occurring with each person.

	not at all violent	somewhat violent	annoyingly violent	definitely violent	very violent	extremely violent
<i>Rachelle</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Lorelei</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

Please read each question and place a check mark on the line of the answer that best represents you.

What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

What is your ethnicity? **(Please check all that represent you.)**

☐ African American

☐ Asian

☐ Caucasian/White

☐ Hispanic

☐ Native American

☐ Other: _____

What grades do you make? **(Please check one.)**

☐ Mostly As

☐ Mostly Bs

☐ Mostly Cs

☐ Mostly Ds

☐ Mostly Fs

What type of guardianship best fits your home? **(Please check all that represent you.)**

☐ Married Parents

☐ Biological Parents but never married

☐ Divorced Parents

☐ Single Parent

☐ Parent with Step-Parent

☐ Grandparents

☐ Foster Parents

☐ Group Home

☐ Other: _____

Each of the following situations has occurred in a high school setting. Please read each scenario and respond to the statement below.

A. Mia sends a note to several classmates stating that Tonya is pregnant. Tonya finds out that a rumor has been spread by Mia. In turn, Tonya announces to her class during P.E. that Mia is a liar, and uses degrading language while doing so.

Please circle the number that best describes the level of violence occurring with each person.

	not at all violent	somewhat violent	annoyingly violent	definitely violent	very violent	extremely violent
<i>Mia</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Tonya</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

B. Jeffery bets Tia \$10 to ask Josiah on a date and not show up at the time they agree to meet. Tia accepts the bet and asks Josiah to go to the skating rink at 7:00 p.m. on Friday night. Tia does not meet him on Friday, and instead watches a movie with Jeffery after he pays her \$10.

Please circle the number that best describes the level of violence occurring with each person.

	not at all violent	somewhat violent	annoyingly violent	definitely violent	very violent	extremely violent
<i>Jeffery</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Tia</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Josiah</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

C. Reina and Alex were trying to hit each other in the hallway due to an incident that happened earlier that morning. Terrell sees that his friend, Reina is involved. He jumps in the middle and starts throwing punches at Alex.

Please circle the number that best describes the level of violence occurring with each person.

	not at all violent	somewhat violent	annoyingly violent	definitely violent	very violent	extremely violent
<i>Reina</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Alex</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Terrell</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

Please read each question and place a check mark on the line of the answer that best represents you.

What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

What is your ethnicity? **(Please check all that represent you.)**

☐ African American

☐ Asian

☐ Caucasian/White

☐ Hispanic

☐ Native American

☐ Other: _____

What grades do you make? **(Please check one.)**

☐ Mostly As

☐ Mostly Bs

☐ Mostly Cs

☐ Mostly Ds

☐ Mostly Fs

What type of guardianship best fits your home? **(Please check all that represent you.)**

☐ Married Parents

☐ Biological Parents but never married

☐ Divorced Parents

☐ Single Parent

☐ Parent with Step-Parent

☐ Grandparents

☐ Foster Parents

☐ Group Home

☐ Other: _____

Please answer each question below. You may use the back side of this paper if you need.

Do you think violence can be prevented in your school? Why?

What can be done to prevent violence in your school?

Appendix B

IRB Approval



Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920
Office: 217-581-2125
Fax: 217-581-7181

March 28, 2006

Beth Sanner
Family & Consumer Sciences

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled "Perceptions of Violence Among High School Students" for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has Approved this research protocol following an Expedited Review procedure. IRB review has determined that the protocol involves no more than minimal risk to subjects and satisfies all of the criteria for approval of research.

This protocol has been given the IRB number 06-035. You may proceed with this study from 3/27/2006 to 3/26/2007. You must submit Form E, Continuation Request, to the IRB by 2/13/2007 if you wish to continue the project beyond the approval expiration date.

This approval is valid only for the research activities, timeline, and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any changes to this protocol be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact me, or the Compliance Coordinator, at 581-8576 in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Telephone: 581-8576
Fax: 217-581-7181
Email: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

Upon completion of your research project, please submit Form G, Completion of Research Activities, to the IRB, c/o the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Thank you for your assistance, and the best of success with your research.

John Best, Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
Telephone: 581-6412
Email: jbbest@eiu.edu

Appendix C

Cover Letters

600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920-3099

Office: 217-581-6076
Fax: 217-581-6090
Web: <http://www.eiu.edu/~famsci/>



March 30, 2006

Ms. Kate Ebner and Lyons Township High School Administration:

I am currently a Family and Consumer Sciences graduate student at Eastern Illinois University and am conducting research on the perceptions of violence among high school students. It is my goal to obtain student responses from high schools with diverse populations and in diverse regions of the state of Illinois.

Because students under the age of 18 are minors, they will be required to have a signed parental consent letter signed before participating. Students will be asked to sign an assent form agreeing to take the survey. They will be asked to read three short scenarios and respond by circling the level of severity in which they believe the violent act portrayed. Those students who do not have a signed parental permission form will be given an alternate activity.

After the survey, all students will be asked to participate in two violence prevention activities. The activities are aimed to make students reflect on violent actions in their school. Students will be asked to respond to the activities by answering two questions about how violence can be prevented in their school.

Both the survey and written responses after the activities will be kept confidential. The students' names will not be seen or used for any portion of this research. If a student wishes to stop at any point, they are free to do so. Enclosed in this package is the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board approval, stating that the study will not harm students in any way. I appreciate your consideration for allowing your students to participate in this graduate study.

Sincerely,

Beth Sanner

600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920-3099

Office: 217-581-6076
Fax: 217-581-6090
Web: <http://www.ciu.edu/~famsci/>



April 18, 2006

Ms. Jean Williams and Urbana High School Administration:

I am currently a Family and Consumer Sciences graduate student at Eastern Illinois University and am conducting research on the perceptions of violence among high school students. It is my goal to obtain student responses from high schools with diverse populations and in diverse regions of the state of Illinois.

Because students under the age of 18 are minors, they will be required to have a signed parental consent letter signed before participating. Students will be asked to sign an assent form agreeing to take the survey. They will be asked to read three short scenarios and respond by circling the level of severity in which they believe the violent act portrayed. Those students who do not have a signed parental permission form will be given an alternate activity.

After the survey, all students will be asked to participate in two violence prevention activities. The activities are aimed to make students reflect on violent actions in their school. Students will be asked to respond to the activities by answering two questions about how violence can be prevented in their school.

Both the survey and written responses after the activities will be kept confidential. The students' names will not be seen or used for any portion of this research. If a student wishes to stop at any point, they are free to do so. Enclosed in this package is the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board approval, stating that the study will not harm students in any way. I appreciate your consideration for allowing your students to participate in this graduate study.

Sincerely,

Beth Sanner

600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920-3099

Office: 217-581-6076
Fax: 217-581-6090
Web: <http://www.eiu.edu/~famsci/>



March 30, 2006

Ms. Tawny Henson and Norris City-Omaha-Enfield High School Administration:

I am currently a Family and Consumer Sciences graduate student at Eastern Illinois University and am conducting research on the perceptions of violence among high school students. It is my goal to obtain student responses from high schools with diverse populations and in diverse regions of the state of Illinois.

Because students under the age of 18 are minors, they will be required to have a signed parental consent letter signed before participating. Students will be asked to sign an assent form agreeing to take the survey. They will be asked to read three short scenarios and respond by circling the level of severity in which they believe the violent act portrayed. Those students who do not have a signed parental permission form will be given an alternate activity.

After the survey, all students will be asked to participate in two violence prevention activities. The activities are aimed to make students reflect on violent actions in their school. Students will be asked to respond to the activities by answering two questions about how violence can be prevented in their school.

Both the survey and written responses after the activities will be kept confidential. The students' names will not be seen or used for any portion of this research. If a student wishes to stop at any point, they are free to do so. Enclosed in this package is the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board approval, stating that the study will not harm students in any way. I appreciate your consideration for allowing your students to participate in this graduate study.

Sincerely,

Beth Sanner

Appendix D

School Administration Approval

LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

NORTH CAMPUS
100 S. Brainard Ave.
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 579-6300

April 7, 2006

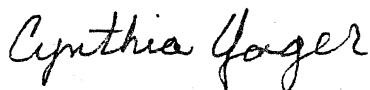
Eastern Illinois University
Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920

Dear John Best:

Lyons Township High School approves of the research study submitted by Beth Sanner (06-035). We have received a letter from the Institutional Review Board at Eastern Illinois University and understand that you approved the study and that it poses minimal risk to students involved.

Students will have a parent or guardian sign a consent form and will sign an assent form before participating. Only students involved in our Family and Consumer Sciences program, will participate in the survey and violence prevention activities. I am aware that the identity of the school, teachers, and students will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Yager
Division Chair, Applied Arts
Lyons Township High School

URBANA HIGH SCHOOL

1002 South Race Street Urbana, Illinois 61801-4998

Telephone: (217) 384-3505 Fax: (217) 384-3532

www.usd116.org/uhs

78

Dr. John Woodward

Principal

(217) 384-3524

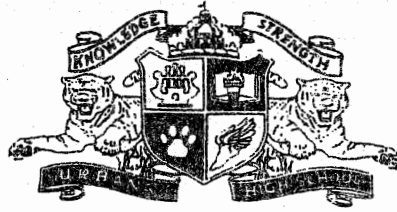
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Ms. Laura Taylor

Assistant Principal

(217) 384-3505

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Mr. Jeff Isenhower

Assistant Principal

Coordinator of Athletics

(217) 384-3533

jisenhower@usd116.org

April 12, 2006

Eastern Illinois University

Institutional Review Board

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

600 Lincoln Avenue

Charleston, Illinois 61920

Dear John Best:

Urbana High School approves of the research study submitted by Beth Sanner (06-035).

We have received a letter from the Institutional Review Board at Eastern Illinois University and understand that you approved the study and that it poses minimal risk to students involved.

Students will have a parent or guardian sign a consent form and will sign an assent form before participating. Only students involved in our Family and Consumer Sciences program will participate in the survey and violence prevention activities. I am aware that the identity of the school, teachers, and students will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Sincerely,

John M. Wilton

NORRIS CITY - OMAHA - ENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Dr. CLIFF D. KARNES, PRINCIPAL
P.O. Box 399
205 E. EUBANKS ST.
NORRIS CITY, ILLINOIS 62869
(618) 378-3312
FAX: (618) 378-3364

April 6, 2006

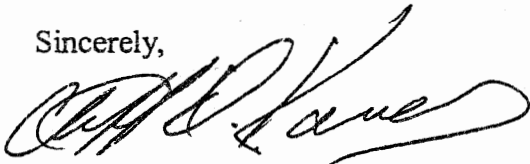
Eastern Illinois University
Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920

Dear John Best:

Norris City - Omaha - Enfield High School approves of the research study submitted by Beth Sanner (06-035). We have received a letter from the Institutional Review Board at Eastern Illinois University and understand that you approved the study and that it poses minimal risk to students involved.

Students will have a parent or guardian sign a consent form and will sign an assent form before participating. Only students involved in our Family and Consumer Sciences program, under the direction of Ms. Tawny Henson, will participate in the survey and violence prevention activities.

Sincerely,



Norris City - Omaha - Enfield High School Administration

Appendix E

Consent and Assent Forms

March 30, 2006

High School Student Guardian:

Your student is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Beth Sanner and supervised by Dr. Rick Wilkinson from the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at Eastern Illinois University. The participation of your student is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

The study is designed to examine the perceptions of school violence among high school students in Illinois. If your student participates in the study, he or she will be asked to complete a short survey during his or her family and consumer sciences class during the school day. Violence prevention activities will also be presented to students, and your student will be asked to respond to the activities by writing ideas of how to prevent violence in their school.

Your student's identity will be anonymous; his or her name will not appear on the survey or on written responses to the violence prevention activities. This study has been approved by Eastern Illinois University's Institutional Review Board and is considered an appropriate study with no potential risks to your student.

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer your student to complete the school violence survey, he or she does not have to answer all questions.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Beth Sanner or Dr. Rick Wilkinson
School of Family and Consumer Sciences
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920
(217) 581-6046
besanner@eiu.edu
rfwilkinson@eiu.edu

Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920
(217) 581-8576
eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

I hereby consent to the participation of _____,
a minor/subject in the investigation herein described. I understand that I am free to
withdraw my consent and discontinue my student's participation at any time.

Signature of Student's Guardian

Date

April 17, 2006

High School Student:

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Beth Sanner and supervised by Dr. Rick Wilkinson, from the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at Eastern Illinois University. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

This study is designed to examine perceptions of school violence among high school students. If you decided to participate, you will be asked to complete a short survey and participate in violence prevention activities. At the end of this class hour, you will be asked to write your ideas for how violence in your school could be prevented.

Your name will not be recorded on the survey or questionnaire. If at any time you feel you do not want to answer the questions on the survey, you are free to stop. If you have further questions about this study, please contact:

Beth Sanner or Dr. Rick Wilkinson
School of Family and Consumer Sciences
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920
(217) 581-6046
besanner@eiu.edu
rfwilkinson@eiu.edu

Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920
(217) 581-8576
eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

I, the undersigned, have defined and fully explained the investigation to the above subject.

Signature of Investigator

Date